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## THE FAITH OF A HUMANISTIC PHILOSOPHER<sup>1</sup>

In referring to Cicero as a humanist, I have excellent authorities behind me. Not only does Schneidewin in his work, *Die Antike Humanität*, use Cicero as his sole authority, and give his book the subtitle, 'Ciceronian Studies', but also two writers as far apart as Aulus Gellius and Professor Irving Babbitt concede this title to Cicero. Both Gellius and Professor Babbitt deprecate the fact that the word *humanism* has degenerated in the popular usage of their contemporaries into something akin in meaning to the word *humanitarianism*. Gellius insists (13.17) that the proper use of the term emphasises rather learning and training in the best arts, power for which is the peculiar possession of man. He refers to Cicero as one who employed the term correctly. Professor Babbitt urges<sup>2</sup> that humanism comprises sympathy with mankind in general along with "discipline and selection", i. e. it combines humanitarianism with culture and love for the best in man. He calls Cicero "an admirable humanist". In his further discussion of the word, he reminds us that the humanism of the early Renaissance was in large part a revolt against a medieval ascetic theology that crushed natural human faculties, and that the humanists of that period aimed at developing the complete man.

I believe that, with all these shades of meaning in view, we may call Cicero a representative humanist in every sense. In his religious philosophy, he steered a middle course between the materialism of the Epicureans, who exalted the body, and the asceticism of the unmodified Stoic doctrine, which ignored the body. Cicero glorified the powers of the human spirit, akin to God, free, born to achieve virtue. He also recognized the claims of the flesh and the reality of its pains and its pleasures. Like the humanists of the dawning Renaissance, he aimed at forming the whole man.

Amid the general disparagement of Cicero that characterized the nineteenth century, largely inspired by Drumann and Mommsen, is a note of contempt for his contribution to philosophy. He was said to be inconsistent. Why did he waver between scepticism in one set of treatises and downright dogmatism in another? Eduard Zeller focussed the faultfinding in these words: 'As soon as the doubt in the inquiries of the Academy has had space to express itself, the Highest Good and duties are treated in a wholly dogmatic tone' (*Die Philosophie der Griechen*<sup>3</sup>, III.1.655). And again, 'As soon as his practical interests come in conflict with doubt, he makes a retreat, and had rather content himself with a bad expedient than admit the inevitable

consequences of his own sceptical statements' (*ibid.*, III.1.657)<sup>4</sup>. The facts are clearly as Zeller states them. Cicero was not a consistent doubter. Speaking as a theorist, he denied the possibility of certain knowledge about anything; but, in discussing doctrines that underlie a religious and moral view of life, he spoke with assurance and conviction.

If you recall the essay of William James on *The Will to Believe*<sup>5</sup>, you will remember that he defends precisely the sort of inconsistency for which Cicero is criticised. He claims that in moral and religious matters, where obviously the evidence can never be gathered within human experience, and so no present proof is attainable, all those who desire a moral universe have the right to "take a leap in the dark", i. e. to believe without proof, to accept the fundamental beliefs as postulates. The consequences hanging on certain beliefs are so important for the present life that they do not permit us to wait till eternity for their solution.

Cicero's alleged inconsistency is just this—as an honest thinker he finds human logic too fallible, human experience and insight too limited to reach coercive proof in any field. The utmost that the reason can attain is the probable, the *verisimile*. Especially is this true of the great mysteries of the spiritual world—God, virtue, the nature of the soul. But, as a teacher of morals and as a statesman striving to establish government on the sure foundation of justice and eternal law, he finds these beliefs, unprovable though they be, indispensable to his endeavors. Therefore, in full consciousness that he has just denied all intellectual certainty regarding them, he deliberately, for practical reasons, postulates their truth, and on them rears the structure of personal morality and wise statecraft. Here again we find an illustration of Cicero's doubly humanistic spirit; on the intellectual side, he uses his reason keenly and severely to discover truth and detect error, but, where intellect fails, he dares to believe, without logical proof, that which best serves the deep needs of humanity.

I have lately made a rather detailed study of Cicero's philosophical treatises, in an attempt to justify this interpretation of his attitude<sup>6</sup>. As a result, I am convinced that, even in the speculative treatises, he always manifests the spirit of a believer rather than that of a sceptic. In each discussion Cicero favors some doctrine rather than another, even though there be flaws in the proof of that doctrine. His inconsistency,

<sup>2</sup>See E. Zeller, *A History of Eclecticism in Greek Philosophy*, as translated by S. F. Alleyne, 154, 157 London and New York, Longmans, Green, and Company, 1883).

<sup>3</sup>London and New York, Longmans, Green, and Company, 1917.

<sup>4</sup>In a doctoral dissertation, *The Relation of Dogmatism and Scepticism in the Philosophical Treatises of Cicero*, accepted by Columbia University (1925). <The dissertation is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. C. K.>.

<sup>1</sup>This paper was read at the Seventh Annual Fall Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held at Barnard College, on November 28, 1925.

<sup>2</sup>Literature and the American College, 7 (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908).

is, therefore, on the whole less than his detractors would lead us to suppose. I do not wish to weary you with too many details of my investigation, but, following a lofty precedent, "summa sequar fastigia rerum".

In discussing the subject of the Highest Good, Cicero examines the views of the various Schools. He rejects the theory of the Epicureans, who found the Highest Good in Pleasure; he criticises the austere view of the early Stoics, who called Virtue the supreme and only good; he accepts as his own the humanistic doctrine of Antiochus, who called Virtue the supreme good, but admitted to a subordinate place in the *res* the goods of the body and estate. But, even while he accepts this view, Cicero points out the logical difficulties involved in it. If, he says, in substance, bodily goods are genuine goods, then bodily evils are genuine evils, and, if this is so, how can virtue alone bring perfect blessedness? But, if bodily ills be not genuine evils, then the whole doctrine of Antiochus and the Peripatetics collapses (*De Finibus* 5.86). Cicero admits his inability to solve the problem of the exact relation of external ills to the inner peace that virtue brings. It remained for Christianity, says Thiaucourt, to escape the difficulty by postponing the consummation of happiness to the after-life.

Cicero rejected the Epicurean view, not only on logical grounds, but also on ethical grounds. Such a view, he declares, lays the foundation of virtue in water (2.72<sup>9</sup>). It should be suppressed, not by a philosopher, but by the censor (2.59). It makes the body the criterion of good, and, if that were the case, the good of man and the good of the beasts would be the same (2.111). Cicero emphasises the need of correct thinking as a basis for action. Epicurus and others of his School, he admits, acted better than they spoke; but this only shows that the instinct for goodness can rise superior to evil theory (2.81).

After thus assailing the materialists of his day, Cicero turns to the ascetics. If the Epicureans erred by conceding too much to the body, the Stoics granted too little to the body. Cicero begins his criticism of the Stoic position by a gently ironical comment on the impeccable logic of their system. The system is so skilfully interlocked, he asserts, that, if you move a single letter, the whole structure collapses! (3.74). But the Stoic premises are often false, though their syllogisms are well constructed, and their logical conclusions are often false in the light of consciousness. Against the doctrines that all sins are equally heinous, that all the wise are equally blessed and all the unwise equally wretched, nature and truth herself cry aloud (4.55). Thus Cicero draws the prop of intellectual certainty from the Stoic doctrine of the End.

But a stronger argument against the austere Stoic view, in the eyes of Cicero, is the ethical argument. The system does not touch the heart, even when it convinces the mind. The ideal of virtue alone as the End would not satisfy even a disembodied spirit, he asserts (4.27). Virtue itself is lost if we disregard our-

selves and our own nature (4.40). '<Stoicism> is a doctrine', he declares, 'neither moderate nor gentle, but somewhat harsher and more austere than either truth or nature will suffer' (*Pro Murena* 60). According to the orthodox Stoics themselves, it was almost impossible to attain virtue. Seneca thought that the Wise Man might appear once in five hundred years (*Epistles* 42.1). Emil Brehier (*Chrysippe*, 217-218 [Paris, 1910]), suggests that Wisdom in the Stoic sense contained an element of Christian sainthood, human virtue with something superhuman added. But Cicero was not interested in creating a few saints; he aimed at an ideal that the common man might at least hope to attain. As he reminded the Epicureans that man has a soul as well as a body, so he reminds the Stoics that man has a body as well as a soul. Both are to be esteemed, and with regard for both we must construct our idea of the Chief Good (4.25).

Thus steering a middle course between materialism and asceticism, Cicero adopts the view of Antiochus, setting up as an ideal the life that accords with the nature of man perfected on all sides and lacking nothing (5.26). Cicero makes no concession to man at his feeblest and lowest; he admits bodily goods to the *Summum Bonum*, but always in the second rank. He nowhere mentions the body in this discussion except as subordinate to the spirit. He tells us that virtue outshines bodily goods as sunlight outshines starlight, that in the balances it outweighs the earth and the seas. Virtue is the product of man's own will. At birth we have the seeds of virtue divinely implanted in us, but they flower into mature virtue only by the work of the will (5.36). 'No man owes his virtue to God' is Cicero's emphatic declaration (*De Natura Deorum* 3.36). It was on this very point that St. Augustine departed from the Ciceronian tradition. St. Augustine's doctrine of grace gave all the glory to God. In that ancient Christian controversy, it was Pelagius who maintained Cicero's exultant creed of faith in man and in man's power to achieve righteousness. But, in Cicero's view, man's power to achieve virtue rests on the fact that he is the son of God. Where the Augustinians held that the original bond between man and God has been broken and must be renewed in each individual case, to Cicero the bond is perpetual, and bestows a natural dignity upon all men. To him man seems a mortal god. The Christian conception, which culminated in such humility as that expressed in the hymn, "A dying worm am I", is the very antithesis of Cicero's view of the dignity of human nature. Yet this humanistic view, equally removed from materialism on the one hand and from asceticism on the other, is full of inspiration for moral effort and struggle. Man consists of body and spirit. Both are worthy of consideration: yet the good of the spirit is infinitely more important than that of the flesh; virtue, which is the good of the spirit, may be achieved only by effort of will, though our divine origin gives us a natural capacity for it. Such is the teaching of Cicero on man's chief good. He preaches the good of the whole man, bodily, sensuous

<sup>9</sup>In this and the next three paragraphs the references are to the *De Finibus*, unless it is otherwise stated.



and spiritual; but he insists that the spiritual element is so far superior that, by comparison with it, all others are imperceptible (5.90).

Cicero devotes a separate treatise, *De Fato*, to a discussion of free will. It is obvious that a man who declared that no one owes his virtue to God would maintain the freedom of the will. Cicero refutes the arguments by which the Stoic Chrysippus tried to establish the doctrine of fate. Cicero has the rare experience here of agreeing with the Epicureans, who also believed in freedom of the will. But he refuses to accept the arguments by which they defended their belief. When, in their fear of losing freedom, they deny the obvious proposition that every judgment is either true or false, and when they add the notion of the swerve to the atomic theory of Democritus, in order to explain freedom, Cicero will not go with them. And yet, so essential to Cicero's scheme of life is belief in freedom, that, as he declares, he had rather accept the doctrine of the swerve, if need be, than relinquish belief in freedom (*De Fato* 21). In the same spirit, St. Augustine, who abhorred astrology, declared that he had rather accept that foolish doctrine, if need be, than give up faith in the foreknowledge of God (*De Civitate Dei* 5.9).

Cicero bases his belief in freedom on moral grounds, not on logical proof. Even St. Augustine, who bitterly opposed Cicero because the latter, in asserting freedom, denied the foreknowledge of God, admits that Cicero's purpose was to benefit human life (*De Civitate Dei* 5.9). If there is no freedom, says Cicero, there is no moral responsibility. If neither consent nor action is in our control, then there is no justice in praise, blame, honor, or punishment. Since this consequence is vicious, we must conclude that all things are not in the power of fate (*De Fato* 40).

In all fields save that of the human will, Cicero is ready to admit inflexible natural causality. He grants that inborn qualities of men are due to natural causes, such as climate and heredity; but he insists that all natural tendencies may be overcome by will, desire, and training. He cites the case of Socrates, who rose superior to certain natural evil dispositions (*De Fato* 11).

It has been suggested that Cicero felt the need to defend the doctrine of freedom not only in the interest of individual morality, but for the sake of the falling Republic. Thus he hoped to stir men up to action for political freedom. 'Fatalism is a doctrine favorable to despotism', says Thiaucourt<sup>7</sup>, 'and every defence of free will is a blow for liberty'. Thus, on the ground that the doctrine of free will is essential for personal virtue and advantageous for the State, Cicero assumes its truth and declares without any reservation that men have control over their own choices: *Est autem aliquid in nostra potestate* (*De Fato* 31).

In the sharp antithesis drawn by Cicero between the goods of the body and the goods of the spirit is implied the other-worldly origin of the soul. In discussing the nature of the gods he says that this study is

most valuable for the light it throws on the nature of the soul of man (1.1<sup>8</sup>). In his study of Deity, as in that of the Highest Good, Cicero takes up the doctrines of the Schools, subjects them to critical scrutiny in the fashion of the New Academy, but finally declares for one as more probable than the others. He rejects the atheistical doctrine of the Epicureans; he criticises the superstition and the arrogant certainty of the Stoics; he is not satisfied with the purely ritualistic religion of Cotta, the Pontifex Maximus. Yet, of them all, he casts his vote for the Stoic doctrine as nearest the truth, although he does not find convincing the arguments by which the Stoics claimed to prove it.

The Epicureans, he says, are practically atheists, since they separate God from human life. Though Epicurus wrote on religion like a high priest, he declares, yet, in denying that the gods love or care for man, he destroys the temples as surely as did Xerxes with his marauding hosts (1.115). If there is no bond between Deity and man, there is no basis for human virtues. For if piety, reverence, and religion go, probably faith, cooperation, and justice go too (1.3-4). Thus Cicero lays down the principle that the only basis of ethical conduct lies in the bond between man and the unseen spiritual world. If there be such a god as that of Epicurus, he says, let him go! (1.124). The trouble with the Epicureans, he asserts, is their slavish dependence on the words and authority of Epicurus (1.72).

Authority, in Cicero's view, was always the foe of truth. He often voices his pride in the attitude of the New Academy, which gave its adherents untrammelled liberty (*Academica* 2.8, 65). For this very reason, he says, he attached himself to that School, because he thought that in its methods and in its aims lay the best chance of learning the truth. Other students were caught young, and attached to some closed system of doctrine which they understood very imperfectly. Thereafter they spent all their energies defending its tenets. To Cicero it was the glory of the Academy that it enjoined but one duty, that of seeking the truth (*Academica* 2.7), and that its platform was broad enough to accommodate all varieties of belief. Yet there were some, he asserts, who, absurdly enough, urged him to attach himself to some definite school of doctrine, no matter which (*Academica* 2.132).

Turning to the Stoics, Cicero found abundant ground to criticise them for overconfidence in their own arguments. By the very multitude of their arguments, he says, they make uncertain that which is in itself certain (3.10). They who enter the arena of dialectic challenge the opposition of other dialecticians (3.9). In the *De Natura Deorum*, Cicero's Academic disputant balances syllogism against syllogism and *sorites* against *sorites*. Dialectic, like Penelope, unravels her own web. Cicero aims at showing that the universe cannot be wholly expressed in the categories of formal logic, or so neatly tabulated and analysed as to defy all questioning.

<sup>7</sup>C. Thiaucourt, *Essai sur les Traités Philosophiques de Cicéron*, 288 (Paris, 1885).

<sup>8</sup>In this and the seven succeeding paragraphs the references are to the *De Natura Deorum*, unless it is otherwise stated.

Cicero questions the Stoic idea of God in nature. He will not admit theology as a substitute for natural science. He refuses to see God in the regular movements of the stars, nor will he consent to call heat a divine element. He states the principle that one must always seek a natural explanation of a natural phenomenon and not flee to God as to an altar (3.24).

Denying that the cosmos necessarily shows divine creatorship (3.28), Cicero also questions the Stoic doctrine of Providence. While the Epicureans denied all connection between the gods and men, the Stoics laid great emphasis on the works of Providence. They elaborated in minute detail the adaptation of means to end, so that, as Zeller says, 'they not infrequently fell into the ridiculous and the pedantic in their endeavor to trace the special end for which each thing exists'. 'The pig is destined for food', was one of their examples of adaptation, 'and therefore consciousness has been bestowed upon it to keep its flesh from spoiling' (2.160). Carneades's satiric comment on this has been preserved by Porphyry: 'That which attains the end for which it was created is benefited. So the pig, created to be killed and eaten, is thereby benefited' (*De Abstinencia* 3.20).

To the argument for Providence and design, Cicero raises the objection that must always challenge any optimistic and complacent philosophy, namely, the problem of sin and pain. Why, he asks, is sin permitted in a world ruled by Divine Providence? If God gave reason, and men use it for evil purposes, is not He who gave the gift to blame? He might have made all men wise and good (3.79).

Again, why do the righteous often suffer while the vicious prosper and triumph (3.80)? If no distinction is made between the lot of the good and the lot of the wicked, there is, apparently no divine government in the world (3.85). Material conditions for a happy life are precisely the gifts God could bestow with just discrimination, since man owed his virtue to his own efforts (3.87).

With a sympathetic eye on the drama of humanity, with its inevitable error and pain, Cicero raises these unanswerable questions. So a modern thinker, William James, combats the self-satisfied optimism of those who rest their case on the argument from design<sup>18</sup>.

There was a time when stall-fed officials of an established church could prove by the valves of the heart, or the round ligatures of the hip-joint, the existence of a "Moral and Intelligent Contriver of the world".... Truly, all we know of good and evil proceeds from nature, but, none the less so, all we know of evil.

The presence of pain and sin in the world seemed to James, as to Cicero, a matter not easily disposed of.

To the Stoics one important argument for the existence of gods was the fact of divination, or miraculous revelation of the future through omens. To the refutation of this miraculous element in religion Cicero devotes an entire treatise, *De Divinatione*. In this he rejects the miraculous as a proof of the spiritual order in the universe, while, at the same time,

he asserts his belief in that spiritual order. 'Divination', he says (2.41<sup>19</sup>), 'is evidently disproved; but the fact that gods exist must be maintained'. To keep religion and destroy superstitious belief in miracles is Cicero's purpose.

In the view of our philosopher, belief in God is too precious a possession to hazard on the claims of divination. 'See', he warns his opponents (2.41), 'how lightly you risk the possibility that, if there be no divination, then there are no gods'.

Cicero refuses to allow a place for divination or supernatural intervention in matters that properly belong in the realm of scientific inquiry. In practical affairs, he says, men resort to experts, not to diviners. Whatever happens has a natural cause; in other words, nothing that can happen is a miracle (2.62). 'Believe me', so Cicero exhorts the believers in the supernatural (2.37), 'you are surrendering the city of philosophy while you defend the outer forts'.

Thus Cicero strives to rule out the supernatural from the realm of physics, and to keep religion free from all adhesions of superstition and credulity. His quarrel with the Stoics is that they try to prove their belief by untenable arguments; that they claim certainty for an elaborate and detailed theology which is incapable of proof; that they link vital belief in God with a mass of tenets that have no real connection with religion, but belong in the realm of scientific investigation. He reconciles science and religion by insisting that they operate in totally distinct spheres.

The dogmatic spirit of the early Stoics did not die in ancient times. But Cicero, conscious of the limits of human powers, decried all arrogant assumptions of certainty, whether in Stoic or in Epicurean, regarding the great mysteries of the universe. On the contrary, he commended the reverent hesitation of serious minds like that of Simonides before the solemn question, *Quid aut quale sit Deus* (*De Natura Deorum* 1.60).

Despite flaws in the Stoic argument, it is for the Stoic belief that Cicero casts his vote at the end of the debate. We have seen that he rejected with passionate protest the view of the Epicureans; and that he subjected the Stoic system to searching criticism at the hands of the New Academy, represented by Cotta. Cotta himself disavowed all interest in a philosophic study of religion and declared himself quite content with the ritual of his forefathers and of the State (*De Natura Deorum* 3.5). In comparison with this view, Cicero judges that of the Stoics to be nearer the truth (*De Natura Deorum* 3.94). He accepts, therefore, the essentials of the Stoic view, that God is, and that he cares for men. The gods of the Stoics, kinsmen and protectors of men, are the more probable, though to base belief in them on dialectic weakens the case, and to apply one's belief in detail dogmatically formulated leads to folly and absurdity.

The argument concerning the existence of Deity is not a tale "of old, unhappy far-off things and battles long ago". In the current number of *The Hibbert*

<sup>18</sup>*Die Philosophie Der Griechen*, III. 1.175.

<sup>19</sup>*The Will to Believe* 43-44.

<sup>19</sup>In this and the two succeeding paragraphs the references are to the *De Divinatione*, unless it is otherwise stated.

Journal (October, 1925), you will find the validity of a theistic belief questioned by Dr. C. D. Broad. He surveys all the arguments for a personal God and draws the conclusion that there is no reason to believe in such a God. There he stops. The case for the gods is still unproved in the light of pure reason. Cicero found the arguments favorable, on the whole, to a belief in God; but for certainty and assurance he went further, into the field of practical reason and ethical need. The two doctrines for which Cicero found a reasonable probability when viewed in the light of theoretical truth he assumed as certain when he came to lay down rules for conduct. These doctrines are, as we have seen, the existence of God and the supremacy of virtue as the End. On these beliefs Cicero bases all his ethical philosophy, both for the individual and for the State. In the ethical treatises he declines to argue further on these topics. The time for speculation and reflective balancing of evidence is past, now that philosophy is to be applied to life. So he postulates the bare essentials of his religious faith. In his discussion of duties he says (De Officiis 3.33), 'As the geometers are wont to ask that certain axioms be assumed as true, so I ask of you to grant that nothing save the virtuous is worthy to be sought for itself'. Again, in the political dialogues, when he introduces the subject of human laws, he asks the hearer to grant the proposition that the universe is ruled by gods (De Legibus 1.21). He defends his new dogmatic style on the ground that the State and its law are of the most vital importance (1.37). He will have the Epicureans retire to their own gardens, *even if their doctrine be true*, lest they do some harm to the State. The New Academy he entreats to be silent. She has her place, but it is not in the discussion of statecraft (1.39). Like a priest standing on holy ground, Cicero cries *Favete linguis* to the profane. He bids the philosophers give over their speculations, now that the time has come to apply truth to the uses of man and society.

Postulating the supremacy of virtue, Cicero shows that virtue is the only armor of man against the common ills of life—pain, sorrow, and the fear of death. He refuses, as always, to make exact dogmatic statements. He stands aloof from the dispute of the Schools as to whether pain and grief are to be considered genuine evils or not, and whether the life of the good man is to be considered blessed or perfectly blessed. He will not even express assurance that the individual soul is immortal. He asserts its divinity, not its immortality. He hopes for immortality, and, citing the authority of Plato, declares (Tusculanae Disputationes 1.39-40), 'I had rather be wrong with Plato than right with his opponents'. Cicero would rather stand with Plato, that 'prince of philosophers', than be counted with the apostles of materialism. He has no proof of immortality, but he cannot believe that the mysterious Power that rules the universe made and nurtured man only to let him fall at last into the unending evil of death (*ibid.*, 1.118).

But, even if there be no after-life, Cicero insists, the worth of virtue is unassailable. Appealing to the case of Socrates, he declares that, even if there is no

immortality, he who dies the death of the righteous is in a better state than he who lives in wrongdoing (*ibid.*, 1.99). 'One day', he declares, 'spent in virtuous living, following the precepts of wisdom, is better than an immortality of sin' (*ibid.*, 5.5).

Virtue is not only protective armor for the individual; it is a tool to be used aggressively for the good of society and for that unit of society most precious to a Roman, the organized State. To Cicero the normal field for virtuous action is human society. Human society is sacred on account of its link with the Divine. Men are drawn together in society by the common possession of reason and speech, divine gifts. Justice, the virtue which holds society together, is founded on the relation of gods and men (De Officiis 1.153). He who sins against society sins against the gods who established it (De Officiis 3.28). Human virtue approaches the gods most closely in founding and preserving states (De Re Publica 1.12). The commonwealth belongs to gods and men, and this association gives honor and dignity to human society (De Legibus 1.23). By such unequivocal statements does Cicero declare his faith in the dependence of organized human life on Divine and Unseen Power.

Several corollaries follow from this religious view of society: respect for individual men of all ranks; consideration for allies, foreigners, and even slaves; a humane and peace-loving foreign policy for the nation, since enemies are also members of the Divine Commonwealth. A belief in the brotherhood of man demands democracy within the State. But (and here we recognize the voice of the aristocratic, selective humanist), it must not be a pure democracy, since men are not equal in ability. Unrestricted liberty reacts and ends in tyranny (De Re Publica 1.68).

The law by which the organized State exists is God's law; it existed ages before human law (De Legibus 3.8). The study of law must begin with Jove (De Legibus 2.7). The belief that human law is derived from divine and eternal law, a belief common to Cicero and the Stoics, played a great part in the later development of Roman jurisprudence. Full credit is given to Cicero by Laferrière for his work in broadening Roman law and in basing it on the natural relations of God, man, and society<sup>12</sup>.

The supreme manifestation of virtue is service to the State. A life spent in such service, Cicero tells us, if accompanied by personal virtue, is a sure road to the skies. There is a sure place in heaven awaiting all those who serve the State (De Re Publica 6.13 and 16). Cicero thus appears to speak with assurance at last of the immortality about which he refused to dogmatize before. Yet even here the other world is seen only through the bright veil of Scipio's Vision, "a hope begotten, not a thesis proved".

No one could read Cicero's Letters and doubt that political life was his chief interest. He was no mystic; there is no trace in the Letters of any tendency to muse on the nature of God or the other world. In the con-

<sup>12</sup>Firmin Laferrière, *L'Influence de la Stoïcisme sur la Doctrine des Jurisconsultes Romains*, in *Mémoires de l'Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques*, 10.583 (Paris, 1860).



creteness and practicality of his interests he is a true Roman. The record of his last battle with Antony justifies us in believing that the absorbing love of his life was the aristocratic Republic of Rome. Let me remind you, then, as I close, of Cicero's procedure in bringing his philosophy into the Forum. He based that which was to him the most interesting, the most real, and the most important thing in life, that for which he sacrificed his own life, on certain religious tenets, very simple, and very briefly expressed. These tenets were that the central Power of the universe is spiritual, not material; that the soul of man is akin to this spiritual force; that virtue and not material gain is man's chief good. Even these simple and basic tenets cannot be proved beyond a peradventure; there are difficulties in the way of wholly satisfactory proof and man's logic can never attain to more than the probable truth. The great mass of doctrine that accumulated around these principles in the Schools and theological seminaries of that day, belief in miracles, cosmological theories, arrogantly precise creeds worthless for the guidance of conduct, must be stripped quite away. But the religious essentials, the real fundamentals, without which life becomes brutal, chaotic, hopeless, Cicero dares to assume without proof and on them to rear the stately walls of organized human society. Cicero is a sceptic in so far as he rejects all unproved assertions relating to the general field of knowledge; further, he will not avail himself of fallacious arguments even for those doctrines which he finds absolutely necessary for ethics. He believes that the human will is free, but he rejects the Epicurean arguments for freedom; he finds that, when the Stoics argue for Deity, they make a belief in God less certain than it was before they spoke. But he is a dogmatist in so far as he accepts the ethical axioms without proof. That which in the field of pure reason could never be more than probable becomes to Cicero true in the field of the practical reason, because of its indispensable value to the well-being of man.

It appears to me that Cicero's philosophical position is the truly humanistic position, if one takes that word in both its shades of meaning. On the intellectual side, he could satisfy the demand of Aulus Gellius, to whom *eruditio* was the essential element in humanism. He burns with a desire to learn the truth (*Academica* 2.65); he rebukes superstition and credulity; he scorns the mental indolence that contents itself with flimsy arguments for its beliefs and is satisfied to slumber at the feet of authority. On the other hand, he does not neglect love of mankind, the humanitarianism which we have come to reckon an equally valuable element in humanism. He spurns an idea of religion that ignores man's frail body and its instincts; and the truth that is veiled from the weak vision of men, he dares to postulate when human happiness and the stability of human society depend upon it.

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## REVIEWS

The Relation of Dogmatism and Scepticism in the Philosophical Treatises of Cicero. By Margaret Young Henry. Geneva, New York: W. F. Humphrey (1925). Pp. viii + 117.

It was worth while for Miss Henry, in a dissertation submitted to the Department of Greek and Latin at Columbia University, to undertake a summary examination of the negative and the positive elements in Cicero's philosophy. The avowedly eclectic character of his speculations exposes him to broadsides of criticism from different schools, for the open-minded always stand in danger of attack from the adherents to rigid system. In particular, Caesar-worshippers who repeat with facile detraction that in politics Cicero was nothing but a trimmer ('Achselträger') have found added satisfaction in detecting looseness under his philosophical position. What values, they would ask, can be attached to the dogmatic ethics of this hesitant and semisceptical academic thinker? An answer is given in the treatise before us, in which very interesting parallels are repeatedly drawn between the somewhat overemphasized inconsistency of Cicero and the outlook of such a modern thinker as William James. James's book, *The Will to Believe*, defending, as it does, dogmatism in moral matters alongside of doubt in the theoretical sphere, has suggested a fair line for championing Cicero against the charges of disjointed thought which Zeller and others have levelled at him. Not feebleness of wit, but practical intelligence prompts a sharp distinction between two classes of problems—those of the speculative reason as applied to metaphysics or even to physical science, where the "sceptical balance" may be the absolutely wise one, and, on the other hand, those of moral conduct, which "immediately present themselves as questions whose solution cannot wait for sensible proof".

A typical instance of this sensible attitude is the justification of Cicero's dogmatism in the *Tusculan Disputations* (92):

Cicero's concept of a spiritual universe is unprovable; the best knowledge man can attain is the *verisimile*; even the *consensus gentium* which corroborates elemental moral views is unreliable since it is so often corrupted by false custom and education. But on account of the supreme importance of belief in God, the divine soul, and virtue, Cicero postulates or asserts the soul's knowledge of her own existence and activity, although from the point of view of dialectic proof he has previously denied certainty regarding both. His dogmatic treatment of these beliefs is justified in the eyes of all who hold that philosophy may be made the basis for ethical action. Action cannot be based upon doubt or speculation. "Scepticism in moral matters is an active ally of immorality!" . . .

The treatise consists of a well-ordered study of "A. The Speculative Treatises: their affirmative trend" (6-77: *De Finibus*, 6-25, *Academica*, 26-35, *De Natura Deorum*, 36-55, *De Divinatione*, 56-66, *De Fato*, 67-77), and "B. The Ethical Treatises: their positive

<sup>1</sup>So William James, *The Will To Believe*, 109.



assertions" (78-117: *Tusculanae Disputationes*, 78-94, *De Officiis*, 95-106, *De Republica* and *De Legibus*, 107-117). Though there is sound classical authority for regarding politics as ethical, I should have preferred to find the *De Republica* and the *De Legibus* given clearly in the Table of Contents under a separate heading. 'C. The Political Treatises'. Indeed, the subtitle, *The Political Dialogues*, found in the text under the caption of Chapter VIII (107), goes halfway towards my suggestion: the separate heading I suggest would have been a testimony to Cicero's predominant interest in public life.

After an excellent Table of Contents (iii-vii), and a Bibliography (viii) comes the main body of the treatise, which embraces a brief Introduction (1-5), and eight chapters on the works of Cicero named above. The scrutiny of their teaching is usefully fortified with apposite quotations from the Latin text, from authorities on Cicero, and from several modern philosophers.

It is of vital importance to show convincingly that the theoretical dialogues are not a congeries of indeterminate reflections, but possess a positive tendency. Very properly, therefore, the Academic School is defended from allegations of 'scepticism', in the modern sense of the word, for suspension of judgment is a different thing from blank negation. One of the winning traits in Cicero is his consciousness that as a follower of the New Academy he was entitled to seek truth wherever, upon investigation, it appeared to exist. Thus, in the *De Natura Deorum* he felt himself drawn to the Stoic reasoning on the divine rather than to the Academic. But he is intellectually unfettered by Stoicism, and so, in the *De Divinatione*, we discover him, in argument at least, throwing over the Stoic contention about possible discernment of the future, while incidentally there arises in our minds an uneasy suspicion of his intellectual honesty in countenancing the practice of a state-augury, the truth of whose supernatural claims he has disallowed. This is only one of many significant points encountered during the discussions of the treatise.

Though Miss Henry's work does not attempt an exhaustive estimate of Cicero's place in philosophy, it calls attention to several contributions of value which he made to speculation, and makes suggestive allusions to many doctrines of his—metaphysical, moral, and religious—which strikingly agree or disagree not only with ancient but also with Christian thought.

I quote one such parallel, fraught with deep meaning for the history of modern States: it comes from the section on the *De Republica* and the *De Legibus* that is concerned with the relation of deity to society and law, and it follows the treatment of Cicero's views on Democracy (114):

It is a pragmatic view which thus applies the doctrines of God and a divine soul and a supernatural law to the stabilization of human institutions. . . . <Cicero> applies a belief in spiritual powers, an unprovable tenet, to the preservation of the Roman state, the best of all possible governments. In this view of the dependence of free government on moral and unseen Forces, it is interesting to find Lord Bryce<sup>3</sup> in accord

with Cicero. "It is by a reverence for the Powers unseen that impose these [moral] sanctions . . . that the fabric of society has been held together. The future of democracy, then, is part of two larger branches of inquiry, the future of religion and the prospects of human progress".

With appropriate effect, then, the treatise touches finally upon the subject of organized religion and the State (115-117). Cicero's attitude towards the supernatural forms a fitting reply to those who overstate his scepticism. Whatever his theoretical difficulties were, there is no doubt that for him the divine had objective existence. It was no crafty invention to serve the purposes of the State. In the reality of spiritual forces, beyond man and above man, controlling man and caring for man, Cicero was a firm believer: such forces were to him the guarantee that the human mind should think aright and to good purpose: his enim rebus imbutae mentes haud sanè abhorrebunt ab utili aut a vera sententia (*De Legibus* 2.15). Here, in the words *utili* and *vera*, we have a characteristically Roman blend of the theoretical and the practical, which this dissertation admirably serves to illustrate. The concluding sentence strikes the dominant note of the whole (117):

... That which in the field of pure reason could never be more than *verisimile*, becomes the *verum* in the field of practical reason, because of the inner witness, and because of its indispensable value to a happy and well-ordered life.

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First Year Latin. By Walter Eugene Foster and Samuel Dwight Arms. Richmond, Virginia: Johnson Publishing Company (1925). Pp. xviii + 351.

First Year Latin, by Messrs. Foster and Arms, seems to be a very usable book. It follows closely the recommendations made in the Report of the Classical Investigation, and, in the main, meets the requirements of the New York State Regents' Syllabus.

The book begins with a short Introductory Lesson (xv-xvii) on pronunciation, division of syllables, quantity, accent, gender. This is designed to be used mainly for reference. Then come 120 Lessons, in two Parts. Most of the Lessons are really short enough to be covered in a single recitation period.

Part I, Lessons I-C (1-216), is designed to provide a simple first-year course for teachers who prefer to postpone to the third half-year more difficult topics, such as the uses of the subjunctive. Part II, Lessons I-XX (219-264), includes, besides minor topics, the subjunctive, irregular verbs, deponents, participles, infinitives, indirect statements (already considered in Part I), and indirect questions. Singularly enough, the ablative absolute nowhere appears.

The features of the book which seem most commendable are the following.

(1) Time-Limited Tests, nine in number. They offer an excellent opportunity for reviewing vocabulary. Three times, also, there is a One Hundred Word Test; these afford opportunities for testing knowledge both of vocabulary and of paradigms.

<sup>3</sup>Modern Democracies, 2.606 (London and New York, The Macmillan Company, 1921).

(2) Derivation Notebook. Very definite directions are given (43-44) for the arrangement of a derivation notebook, and from time to time the pupil is definitely instructed concerning the material which is to be entered in it.

(3) Dictation and Oral Work. Opportunity is offered for much oral work. Thus, there is an "Aural Exercise" (6), in which the pupil has to translate Latin sentences "at hearing", and then to reproduce them in Latin orally. Again, he is to write a Latin paragraph from dictation, to compare his draft with the original, and then to translate (114).

(4) Drill Work. The book gives opportunity for drills of various kinds. One kind is seen in Lesson XLIX (103), where a review of the six uses of the ablative thus far presented is outlined. Another appears in Lesson LVIII (124). There the pupil is directed to write in parallel columns certain synopses, with translations. Lesson LXXVI (160) contains a Colloquium which gives excellent drill upon cardinal numerals. Lesson LXXXV (177) gives a device for using the ordinals every day in the class-room.

(5) Arrangement of Lessons. Almost without exception the Lessons are so arranged that the grammar work and the vocabulary are upon the right-hand pages, and the passages set for translation are upon the following left-hand pages.

(6) Variety of Material. The book seems particularly successful in that varied material is presented in successive Lessons, with the result that the work ought not to prove mechanical and monotonous. Note the following bare outline of the first Lessons: I, *porto* (present active), vocabulary (verbs), exercises; II, vocabulary (nouns), rules, exercises, derivation work; III, vocabulary (nouns and adjectives), *sum* (present), rules, exercises, aural exercise; IV, *porto* (present passive), vocabulary, rules, exercises, derivation work; V, rule, vocabulary, exercises, reading lesson, questions to be answered in Latin. It is difficult to find two successive Lessons that contain the same kind of material.

In general, the explanations and rules are clear and brief. The directions to the pupils, however, frequently lack clearness. Needed directions are often wanting entirely. To the sentences set for translation directions to the pupil are seldom prefixed. Open to criticism, also, are the sets of questions to be answered in Latin without any material on which to base the answer. See e. g. Lesson VI. A letter designed for translation into Latin (50) carries with it no explanation of the form of salutation for a Latin letter.

The development of the indirect statement is the worst piece of work in the book. Lesson LXVI, where the subject is first approached, is not so bad, except for the rule that "An independent declarative statement used as the direct object of a verb of saying ... has its verb in the infinitive with subject accusative" (§ 341). Lessons XIV and XV in Part II, which continue the subject, contain rules (§§ 576, 582) that will mean nothing to a first-year pupil. They contain, too, barbarous translations such as "Jason

says Argus the ship to build" (§ 575). How will such a translation clarify the subject for the pupil?

The sentences and connected passages set for translation are well-chosen and interesting. Among the latter are short stories from Greek and Roman history and mythology. Of these the longest is the Perseus story from Richie, *Fabulae Faciles*. There are also selections from Richie's *Argonauts*, and a six-page Latin play. After many of the reading lessons come special vocabularies, which aid in their translation, but are not to be memorized.

An attempt is made to provide further cultural material by illustrations, Latin mottoes, and certain brief explanations in English, like those concerning Roman money (212). The numerous illustrations are, for the most part, well chosen. The tiny line-drawings of animals that occur at the bottoms of many pages will be especially appealing to children.

Some material in the book belongs in a manual for teachers, not in a text-book for beginners. Thus, on page 44, an acknowledgment is made to Miss Sabin; on page 195 there is, virtually, an advertisement of *Decem Fabulae*; on page 219 the same favor is accorded to *Fabulae Faciles*.

First Year Latin is bound attractively, but not practically, in light grey. The inside of the front cover contains a map of the Roman Empire; the inside of the back cover contains two maps, one of Italy, the other of Rome and its environs.

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#### AMERICAN CLASSICAL LEAGUE

Dean West of Princeton University, while fully recovered from his recent illness, finds that he cannot continue to give the large amount of time and energy needed for the Presidency of the American Classical League. Accordingly he notified the Council of the League to this effect. At a largely attended meeting of the Council, held on November 6, 1926, the future policy of the League and the selection of a new President were fully considered. In view of the gratifying results already achieved and of the favorable prospects for further advances, it was unanimously decided that efforts should be made to secure for the work of the League a permanent endowment so that the gains already made may be increased and strengthened. A great deal has already been accomplished. The results of the Classical Investigation are already apparent in a widespread improvement in the classical teaching in our Schools. While the number of students of Greek is still deplorably small, it is increasing, and the students of Latin in our Schools outnumber the students enrolled in any or all other foreign languages. The Latin enrollment is enormous. New text-books based on findings of the Classical Investigation are frequently appearing and the new regulations of The College Entrance Examination Board for entrance examinations in Latin are also based on these findings. While much more remains to be done, these are very substantial gains which are full of promise for the future. As President Magoffin takes up his important task, he should receive the heartiest cooperation from every friend of classical education. All communications should be addressed to American Classical League, New York University, University Heights, New York City.

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY,  
DECEMBER 1, 1926

ANDREW F. WEST